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Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development

Note verbale of 27 April 2017 from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to transmit herewith copies of the decision taken on 7 April 2017 by the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the CIS member States on the impermissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and representatives of other faiths.

In this connection, the Russian Federation requests that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights circulate the present note verbale and its annex* as official documents of the thirty-fifth session of the Human Rights Council, in all the official languages of the United Nations.

* Issued without formal editing.

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Annex to the note verbale of 27 April 2017 from the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Commonwealth of Independent States

Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs

Decision

7 April 2017 **Tashkent**

On the declaration by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the impermissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and representatives of other faiths

The Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Independent States has decided:

1. To adopt the Declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the impermissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and representatives of other faiths (attached).

2. To request the Russian Federation, as the State presiding over the Commonwealth of Independent States, to circulate the text of the above-mentioned Declaration to the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other international organizations.

For the Kyrgyz Republic

For the Russian Federation

For the Republic of Armenia

For the Republic of Azerbaijan

For the Republic of Belarus

For the Republic of Kazakhstan

For the Republic of Moldova

For the Republic of Tajikistan

For the Republic of Uzbekistan

For Turkmenistan

For Ukraine

Declaration by the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States on the impermissibility of discrimination and intolerance against Christians, Muslims and representatives of other faiths

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Taking note of the relevant international legal provisions on human rights set out in the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other international instruments;

Reaffirming the right of every person to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief and the equality of all people, regardless of their relationship to religion;

Noting that any form of discrimination based on religious affiliation or conviction is a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms and that every crime committed on the grounds of hatred of a religion or belief, xenophobia or intolerance must be decisively and equally condemned, and that all persons must be afforded equal protection before the law;

Expressing concern in connection with the continuing manifestations of intolerance and violence and terrorist acts committed on the basis of religious affiliation or conviction;

Declare that all persons have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, which includes the freedom to have or take part in religions or beliefs of their choosing, and also the right not to have and not to adhere to any religion, to change their religions or beliefs and to adhere to their religions or express their beliefs both individually and in community with others, publicly or in private, through teachings, worship, traditional religious or ceremonial rites or teachings, if such actions do not violate the rights of others and are not at variance with the national law and international obligations of the member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States;

Confirm their firm intention to observe human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief for all, without distinction as to race, national origin, sex, language or religion, and the need to conduct a policy aimed at ensuring respect for places of worship and religious sites, religious monuments, cemeteries and shrines and to protect them against vandalism and destruction;

Call upon political, religious and community leaders to continue their work to prevent and combat intolerance and discrimination against Christians, Muslims and representatives of other faiths, with full respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights;

Note the importance of establishing mutual tolerance and respect between peopl, practising different religions or not practising any religion, and between the religious organizations of the various faiths, and of prohibiting religious and other fanaticism and extremism and acts aimed at instigating and worsening tensions or fomenting hatred between different faiths;

Resolutely condemn all manifestations of intolerance, discrimination and violence and terrorist acts and the use of hate language against Christians, Muslims and representatives of other faiths;

Declare that terrorist acts carried out by individuals or groups associating themselves with a specific religion or belief must never be used to justify intolerance against individuals owing to their religious affiliation;

Consider that it is categorically unacceptable to identify terrorism and violent extremism with any specific religion;

Express concern about the increasing number of attacks against Christians, Muslims and representatives of other faiths in various regions of the world, including acts of intolerance, discrimination, prejudice and violence and hate crimes, which pose a threat to stability and security;

Note the special role of the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, which has become a genuine platform for global interreligious dialogue to prevent and combat intolerance and discrimination on the basis of religion;

Intend in future to strengthen efforts to consolidate the positions of the international community with regard to the impermissibility of discrimination against Christians, Muslims and representatives of other faiths, in particular in the international human rights forums of the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe.